

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

**PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2830, COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. ARCURI) has 7 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) has 1 minute remaining.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, back on April 24, 2006, almost 2 years ago to the day, now Speaker PELOSI released a statement, which I quote, "Americans this week are paying \$2.91 a gallon on average for regular gasoline, 33 cents higher than last month, and double the price when President Bush first came into office."

Speaker PELOSI went on to claim, and I quote again, that "Democrats have a commonsense plan to help bring down skyrocketing gas prices."

□ 1530

Mr. Speaker, the Pelosi petroleum price increase continues to rise, with the average price over \$3.50, hitting consumers at the pump every time they fill up their car.

By voting "no" on the previous question, Members can take a stand against these high prices and demand to see the secret plan that Speaker PELOSI has to reduce gas prices that Democrats have been hiding from the American people since taking control of Congress 17 months ago. I for one would love to see it, but I am afraid that, much like their promises to run the most honest, open and ethical Congress in history, it simply does not exist.

I submit for the RECORD the Statement of Administration Policy on H.R. 2830.

**STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY**

**H.R. 2830—COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008**

The Administration strongly opposes House passage of H.R. 2830 in its current form because it would adversely affect homeland security, protection of the marine environment, and maritime safety and would unreasonably intrude upon the Commandant's authority and discretion to command and control the Coast Guard. Cumulatively, these provisions would compromise the organizational efficiency and operational effectiveness of the Coast Guard; ultimately, they could diminish its effectiveness in carrying out its safety, security, and stewardship missions. Notwithstanding the other provisions of the measure that would enhance Coast Guard operations, the Administration strongly opposes House passage of H.R. 2830.

The Administration urges the House to modify the problematic parts of the bill, including the following:

First, the section of the bill that would require the Coast Guard to provide security around liquefied natural gas terminals and vessels should be eliminated because it provides an unwarranted and unnecessary sub-

sidy to the owners of private infrastructure that is contrary to the existing assistance framework and would divert finite Coast Guard assets from other high-priority missions, as determined by the Commandant. If H.R. 2830 were presented to the President with this provision, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.

Second, the Administration strongly urges the House to adopt the Administration's proposal to introduce organizational flexibility into the Coast Guard command structure and alignment with the other armed forces, rather than the language of Section 210. This section as currently worded would exchange one statutorily-mandated command structure for another, thus defeating the purpose of the Administration's initiative.

Third, the Administration urges the House to substitute the Administration's recently transmitted proposal for the regulation of ballast water treatment for the existing language of title V. The Administration's substitute language would provide for the effective and efficient implementation of ballast water treatment standards and for the development of enforceable national uniform standards to control discharges incidental to the normal operation of vessels without the use of a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Absent such language (or a decision of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals), as of September 30, 2008, discharges incidental to the normal operation of upwards of 13 million vessels—including recreational vessels, towboat vessels, commercial fishing boats, barges, and large ocean-going vessels—will be prohibited by the Clean Water Act unless NPDES permits covering such discharges are in place.

As well, the Administration urges the House to delete those provisions of the bill that would adversely affect Coast Guard missions. Specifically, the Administration urges the House to delete those provisions that would: (1) diminish the authority of the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Commandant concerning how leadership positions within the Service will be graded or placed; (2) reduce or eliminate the Coast Guard's capacity or authority to carry out and adjudicate its merchant mariner licensing mission and support other vital security adjudications of the Department of Homeland Security; (3) establish an interim work authority for a newly hired seaman on an offshore supply vessel or towing vessel, as such authority would open a dangerous security loophole and undermine the security objectives of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential; and (4) prescribe contracting and acquisition practices for the Deepwater program, as these practices would increase the costs of, and add delay to, the Deepwater acquisition process and circumvent review and approval authority of Coast Guard technical authorities. Similarly, while the provision that would alter admission procedures for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy may ultimately be acceptable, this provision has not previously been shared, or even discussed, with the Administration. The Administration, therefore, urges the House to delete this provision.

Finally, the Administration strongly urges the House to adopt the Administration's proposal to protect seafarers who participate in investigations and adjudication of environmental crimes or who have been abandoned in the United States, and thus facilitate the Government's ability to investigate and prosecute environmental crimes. Similarly, the Administration strongly urges the House to restore the much-needed authority to prosecute those who would smuggle undocumented aliens into the United States by sea (Maritime Alien Smuggling Law Enforcement Act).

The Administration looks forward to working with Congress to address these concerns and other problems with the bill previously identified in letters from the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to place the text of the amendment and extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, we have sat here for the past hour and listened to so many speakers talk about energy, when the underlying bill is actually the Coast Guard reauthorization bill. But if our colleagues want to talk about energy, then I think we should point out some very obvious facts to them.

First of all, when the Clinton administration finished in the White House, oil was at \$27 a barrel. It is now at \$119 a barrel, a significant increase. Yet they try to point the finger at this Congress, this Democratic Congress that has been in the majority for 16 months. Yet on every bill that we bring up, every bill that the Democrats bring before this Congress that attempts in any way, shape, fashion or form to reduce the price of oil, we get nothing but "no" votes from the other side of the aisle. That is their response to high energy costs. That is what they want to do to the American people in terms of the energy costs.

I said earlier in the debate a point that I think is very important. They want to talk about priorities as what we do for the big energy companies, what we do for the big oil companies. Well, that is not the priority of this side of the aisle. We want to talk about alternative energy. We want to talk about reducing the dependence on foreign oil, reducing the dependence on gas and on fossil fuels, thereby making our country stronger, both domestically and internationally. If they want to talk about gas and oil, that is the debate. But this debate is about the Coast Guard bill.

Mr. Speaker, the men and women of the Coast Guard are to be commended for their service to our country and their commitment to the multifaceted mission of the Coast Guard. They serve their country, they risk their lives, just to keep us safe, safe along our coasts, safe along our inland waterways; not thousands of miles away, but right here in the United States. We need to ensure that they have the tools and the support to do the job in the best way that they can. The Coast Guard deserves and needs this bill. The American people deserve and need this bill.

Mr. Speaker, after extensive consideration by three House committees, it is time to bring the Coast Guard authorization bill to the floor.

I urge a "yes" vote on the previous question and on the rule.